Reinventing Central Office:

A Primer for

Successful Schools

CROSS CITY CAMPAIGN
For Urban School Reform

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THE CROSS CITY CAMPAIGN FOR URBAN SCHOOL REFORM

Who We Are

Since 1993, school reform leaders from Chicago, Denver, New York, Seattle and Philadelphia — all deeply engaged in systemic reforms — have come together as the Cross City Campaign. Los Angeles is joining us in 1995. Our collective mission is the dramatic improvement of public education so that all urban youth are well prepared for post-secondary education, work and citizenship.

Cross City supports the work of reform leaders within and across large cities to create high-quality schools that ensure educational success for young people. Cross City advocates for policies and practices that support a radical transformation of schools that move authority, resources and accountability to the school level, that reconnect schools with their community, and that completely rethink the role of school districts. We believe that urban public schools, thus reformed, can be restored to the public trust. Cross City works to galvanize public will for public schools. Since our inception, we have learned that:

- There is a great deal of interest on all fronts — parents, reformers, advocates, teachers, principals, university researchers and funders — in this effort. The interesting mix of participants (diverse by race, ethnicity, gender, profession and location) who have years of experience in both practice and policy are working to make community-based school reform happen.
- 'Inventors' need a network. The people in each city who are asking fundamental questions and who are pushing for systemic reforms feel isolated and have responded immediately to the chance to work together. Reformers from each city are both leaders and learners.
- Local reformers need answers to practical school reform policy issues.

We have also learned that we are in clear agreement on the work that lies ahead. Our goals are to improve educational success for urban youth and to build public will for public schools by:

- Improving quality and equity in the classroom.
- Advancing school site authority and accountability.
- Connecting schools and communities.
- Creating a strong national network of urban reform leaders.
- Creating a national voice for urban school issues and successes.
- Building and extending collaboration with other national organizations.

Our collective mission is the dramatic improvement of public education so that all urban youth are well prepared for post-secondary education, work and citizenship.

INTRODUCTION

Rethinking the System From the Bottom Up

All children deserve high-quality education. Students who get the best public education enjoy high expectations, rich content, and successful preparation for further education and work. The other students get lowered expectations, watered-down curriculum and poor preparation for today's workforce or post-secondary education, if they even finish school. Data tell us that young people in the latter group, especially in cities, are overwhelmingly minority and low income. We will pay a high price as a society unless we move aggressively to create the schools that we know educate all students well.

We have ample evidence of successful, small, autonomous and equitable urban schools from which we can learn. But these schools survive largely as alternatives, pilots, magnets or marginal exceptions. What is required to create a system full of such schools?

Students succeed in schools that have high standards, that are small enough so that students and teachers know each other well, that have authority and resources for teaching and learning, and that are accountable for results. But for schools to be accountable for results, schools and their communities need authority. They need to be able to decide what and how they will teach to meet high district standards, who will be hired, and how they will spend their funds and use their buildings.

It has become clear that, in each of our cities, rhetorical pleas for decentralization are commonplace, but central offices have given little real authority to schools. While central office personnel speak of themselves as support for the schools, in truth they are still too often regulators and monitors. Although school board members talk about giving decision-making authority to schools, school funds are still controlled by the central office. The unfortunate truth is that many districts don't seem to trust their school staff and community members to make decisions in the best interest of the children.

This report recommends a fundamental revision of urban public school systems, one that shifts virtually all funds and most authority to the schools and dismantles centralized, bureaucratic structures. The recommendations are grounded in research and actual practice. While no one school district embodies all recommendations, examples of all recommended practices are in place in districts around the country.

There are few guides to what a decentralized system would look like despite the common call for decentralization. What power and functions would be retained at the central office? What functions would be shifted to the schools? What would be the implications for staffing, allocating funds, teacher preparation and development, and purchasing services? This report poses answers to such questions and in the process provides a road map for real decentralization of urban schools.

In each section of R*einventing Central Office,* the Cross City Campaign examines the problems besetting centralized school districts today. Then we draw a picture, our vision, of what a model decentralized system would look like. Finally, we provide our prescription for decentralization, listing what elements must be abolished and what must be established to make this vision a reality.

Reinventing Central Office covers six key areas: governance, budgets, curriculum and instruction, personnel, facilities and accountability. Throughout the report, we raise challenging questions

In each of our cities, rhetorical pleas for decentralization are commonplace, but central offices have given little real authority to schools.

about issues that people working on decentralization are likely to face as they pursue their work. At the end, we describe several danger areas where policy decisions have caused or could cause cities to slip back into centralized, bureaucratic habits.

As a final note, we include an appendix with easy-reference charts and resource lists. The charts illustrate how responsibilities and authority are distributed in our decentralized school system. The resource section offers a preliminary list of people with experience in creating small schools, in developing school budgets, in linking schools and communities, and others whose experience may be helpful. We know that the road to reform is hard enough without having to travel it alone.

We wrote *Reinventing Central Office* to help educators, activists, parents, corporate leaders and elected officials envision another way of organizing a system of schools. We hope it will inspire these groups to ask the provocative questions and to take on the tough political work needed to spur district-wide reform.

This report recommends a fundamental revision of urban public school systems, one that shifts virtually all funds and most authority to the schools and dismantles centralized, bureaucratic structures.

I. GOVERNANCE

The goal of school reform is improved teaching and learning to prepare young people for further education, work, and citizenship. Teachers, the principal, parents and community members need authority to govern the school to reach this goal.

Although school reformers have long discussed school-based management and local school councils as critical education reform elements, few systems have moved real governing power to individual schools and left it there. Central office administrators and school board members, however well-meaning, simply have not been able to shed their authoritarian roles. Instead, school boards have continued policies and procedures that place decision-making authority in the central office. And central office administrators have continued using this authority to micro-manage the schools.

This reign of centralized authority, despite more than a decade of education reform, signals a lack of trust in the ability of school staff to make decisions. This is true not only for principals, teachers and other school staff, but for parents and community members as well. Parents — who represent the best interests of their children and the various languages, races and cultures of the school — are generally excluded from participation in school decisions.

Meanwhile, community members and organizations, whose tax dollars already go to the school system and whose work could enhance educational opportunities, are virtually shut out.

The Vision

Rather than debate which specific functions should move to the school, our decentralization model takes the opposite approach: almost all functions are carried out at the schools under the authority of democratically selected school councils. School councils choose which functions they want performed by the central office, by clusters of cooperating schools, or by outside groups.

In our model, school staff, parents and community members and high school students have authority to govern their schools. Schools form governance councils representing these constituencies. They have significant authority over staffing, curriculum, instruction, assessment and the school budget. They set policy and have the decision-making power and funds to carry it out. Through public reporting on school goals and progress, the councils are held accountable for their decisions (see Section VI, Accountability).

Change in large urban school systems certainly involves debate, disagreement, controversy and organizing. But these lively debates about a school's goals and programs among the new school authorities — the council, parents, the principal and teachers — are healthy signs of strong democracies. Important school decisions often require negotiated understandings among these groups. Different schools would likely reach different solutions, allowing schools to most effectively address their specific needs.

Making the Vision a Reality

ABOLISH:

- The district school board's policy and power monopolies.
- The central administration's micro-management of schools.
- The policies and rules that place all authority with the central office administrators or the school board.
- The isolation of schools from the surrounding community.

This reign of centralized authority, despite more than a decade of education reform, signals a lack of trust in the ability of school staff to make decisions.

In our vision, governance and accountability responsibilities rest with democratically elected local school councils.

ESTABLISH:

Local school councils with authority. In our vision, governance and accountability responsibilities rest with democratically elected local school councils. Each council includes parents and community members, students (in high schools), teachers, other staff and the principal. The principal or lead teacher handles daily operations.

The council hires the principal and evaluates his or her performance annually. Every four years the council decides whether to retain the principal or select a new one.

Council members define their school's mission and goals and help to develop a corresponding, annual school development plan. The plan includes strategies to improve curriculum, instruction, professional development, and parental and community involvement. The council reviews and acts on a variety of student and school progress data as part of the school planning and development cycle. This data is regularly available to the council. It is understandable and disaggregated by race, language, special education status, poverty level and gender.

Council members also approve and control their school's budget (See Section II, Budgets). They make policy decisions based on the budget and their development plan goals. As an ongoing accountability measure, each council reports regularly to the public on school policies, the school's progress in meeting its goals, and the distribution and expenditure of funds (see Section VI, Accountability).

A new role for school staff. The principal plays a key role in proposing policy changes to the local school council and interpreting central policy decisions. This role may be played by a lead teacher in small schools-within-schools (several small schools coexisting in one school building). Principals — or teachers selected as lead teachers — serve as strong instructional leaders, encouraging teachers to take risks. Teachers are central to developing the school instruction and assessment plan and in designing curriculum. They schedule the school day to create time for professional development and collegial discussions. As members of the school council, teachers have a significant role in setting school policies.

An active role for parents. Parents play a significant role as members of local school councils and as their primary constituency. Parents who do not serve on the council nonetheless are active participants at its meetings and in the school.

Parents also act as brokers of community resources. They work to involve school staff in local community organizations to help break down the isolation of the school from the community. In addition, they use their community base to establish community classroom sites that will expand students' learning opportunities.

Close relationships with community groups. The broader community is another key constituency to whom the school is accountable. We see a two-way arrow between the school and community groups, with teachers and the principal active in the community, and community residents and parents active as educational colleagues. If community organization leaders are actively involved in the school, they will be better informed participants if they become council members.

A leadership training and development program. To govern their school effectively, parents, community residents, teachers, students and the principal receive ongoing training and support. One-time training sessions do not adequately cover the many topics

and issues that face councils. Each council develops a schedule for ongoing training for all of its members. This includes group process training but, more importantly, it prepares council members to deal with issues of best practice, quality assessment and effective school organization.

Working with a community group, parents also have additional opportunities for leadership development that enable them to assume positions of increasing responsibility at the school and in the community.

A new role for the school board. The central school board's primary role is to improve school effectiveness and to ensure equity standards. As part of this mission, the school board sets district-wide goals and student achievement standards. Board members approve a district-wide budget and oversee equitable funding for schools.

To shift decision-making authority to the schools, they abolish all policies and procedures that contradict this goal and work with the state to do the same. Boards are responsible for ensuring that students with special needs have access to all appropriate programs and that individual schools do not violate these students' rights.

Their responsibilities also include overseeing the central office's functions and services. Once a year, they conduct a sunset review checking whether schools need and use central office services.

A new role for the central office. **(See page 30).** Although considerably pared down, the central office remains the site for important specific functions.

Goals and standards. The school board and administrators establish broad goals, high standards, learning objectives and curricular frameworks for equity and accountability, consistent with state guidelines.

Equity. A small, central equity-assurance unit ensures that students with disabilities, with limited English proficiency, and from low-income families are well-served and succeeding.

Assistance. A small intervention unit provides assistance, or if necessary, closes schools that are failing their students.

Budget. A budget or treasury department collects taxes, extends levies, develops system-wide and school budget allocations and information, provides reliable computerized budget information and provides schools with their lump-sum operating funds.

Information. A management information system connects schools to the central office mainframe computer, to each other, and to schools all over the world. A data collection/analysis center — perhaps contracted out to a private research consortium of universities and other research groups — collects a variety of student and school data and provides this information to the schools and to the public.

Emergency funds. An emergency funding pool is maintained for unpredictable events, such as major emergency repairs, extraordinary and unexpected energy costs, or substitutes for teachers with extended illnesses.

Legal assistance. A legal/labor unit handles district-wide litigation and centralized union negotiations.

Personnel. A small personnel office carries out background checks and recruits for shortages.

Competitive services. Service departments — such as transportation, food services and payroll — are available if there is sufficient school demand for their competitive prices, and quality and efficiency of service.

CHALLENGING GOVERNANCE QUESTIONS

Defining the makeup of the new local school councils is an issue for decentralizing districts. One question is whether the majority of council members should be parents or staff.

Advocates for teacher majorities argue that educators are the ones implementing school decisions, so they should take the major role in making those decisions. Moreover, teachers have the educational expertise that is important for making school policy decisions.

But advocates for parent majorities argue that schools owe the greatest accountability to parents and students. Parents need a majority on the councils to hold their own with professional educators. Further, schools should be democratically governed by lay people, not professionals.

II. BUDGETS

TEACHER TURNED BUDGET EXPERT

Anyone skeptical about a school's ability to handle its own budget should consider the case of a Denver teacher who used only her calculator to decipher the district's 1993 budget and produce a concise, understandable program budget for the entire system. A variety of forces ultimately pressured the Denver central office into providing individual schools with better information and more flexibility. In 1995, four years after site councils were given budget authority, local school councils are developing their first-ever school-based budgets.

Even when schools are given the right to make their own decisions, they are generally not given the budget authority to back them up. Few urban school districts in the United States give schools budget authority over anything other than marginal issues, such as school supplies and textbooks. Typically, less than half of all per-pupil funds are allocated to the schools, and schools control little of that.

At other times, schools are given budget authority only when drastic budget cuts are necessary. Spring 1993 marked the first time Philadelphia schools were given authority over their budgets, coincidentally when it was necessary to make cuts. Each high school was told to cut more than $150,000 from the following year's budget.

The budget process does not invite public participation. Individual school budgets are either unavailable or incomprehensible. Parents and school staff are denied important information or provided with masses of unintelligible data. Parents, school staff and the public have little way of knowing how money is being spent. In fact, in both Denver and Philadelphia, the budget that is presented to the public excludes millions of dollars from categorical funds. These funds are reflected in another budget document that most citizens never see.

In addition to the bureaucracy of a centralized budget authority, the current school system budget process is inequitable and often highly political. In most schools today, for instance, the amount of money received is tied to the size and seniority of the staff. Because of these allocation methods, the amount of money in a school's budget does not directly relate to its programs. Supplemental allocations for discrete budget items are often based on illogical formulas. This was the case in Chicago, where local school councils discovered that the amount of toilet paper provided to a school was based primarily on the square footage of the building.

At the same time, the current budget process discourages saving and prioritizing. Schools cannot shift money between budget categories, and any money not spent must be returned to the district by the end of the school year.

The Vision

In our vision, money — and the authority it permits — moves to the schools from control by the central office. This change, the most consequential aspect of our decentralization model, might require a change in state law.

Schools receive 100 percent of the district's operating funds. Operating funds include all funds from all sources except capital or debt reduction. The school council and staff develop the overall school budget based on their school's development plan (see Section I, Governance). Then the school council formally approves the budget.

Schools are taxed to support the few remaining and reformed central office functions that allow the system to ensure equity, intervene in failing schools, and respond to fluctuating and unpredictable needs (see Section I, Governance). If schools want to purchase services beyond the minimum provided by the central office, they would pay more.

Schools take responsibility for many of the services formerly administered by the central office, such as transportation, supplies, equipment, repairs and food services. In turn, the central office exists primarily to serve the schools. Schools are free to contract for services with vendors including other schools or a central office department. A department's size would depend on its share of the marketplace.

To receive the maximum benefit from resources, schools routinely purchase or provide services in clusters. Several schools might share a trades person, a social worker or an accountant. Some high schools' home economics departments become food vendors. Vocational education departments compete for repair contracts.

Schools are taxed to link up to the district's main computer. This system creates a highly entrepreneurial Information Department for the district. The department offers links to vendors' computer catalogues; provides paperless purchasing and inventory control services; allows schools or other users to purchase access to an entire encyclopedia or enter the ERIC system; and links schools to various networks. Schools could also buy their own on-line services.

Rather than using current inequitable formulas to distribute funds, school allocations are based on student weighting. Schools, rather than the central office, have primary accountability for their spending. At least once a year, the school council makes a public report on how and on what school funds are being spent.

Making the Vision a Reality

ABOLISH:

- The centralized control of funds.
- The central office's monopoly on services.
- The present allocation formulas.
- The unnecessary categorical and restricted federal and state funding rules.
- The requirement to return unspent funds to central office.
- The obscure and overly technical budget documents.

ESTABLISH:

Budget authority at the school level. In our model, each school receives its own funding, banks it and makes its own budget spending decisions. Schools are able to use funds across budget categories and across years. They keep unspent funds, interest earned on accounts, and fees from groups renting the building and parking lots. Deficits are carried over and deducted from the next year's allocation. The district intervenes and imposes sanctions if overspending is more than marginal.

When there is a citywide shortfall, local school councils — with ample notice and considerable discretion — determine their own budget cuts rather than the central office.

In situations in which several schools are housed in one building, budget authority and funds are allocated directly to each small school. Philadelphia has illustrated the need for this. The city's high school teachers in schools-within-schools have been frustrated by the funding tug-of-war between their needs and the needs of the overall school building. When small schools are not entrusted with their own budget decisions, unnecessary and unproductive tension will continue between these individual learning units and the school-building bureaucracy.

Budget accountability at the school level. Because misappropriation of funds is always a danger, and financial information is often hidden from public view, schools regularly provide their communities with readable budget and finance reports. The reports include an annual audit, paid for by the school, as well as a comparison of budget projections to actual revenues and expenditures. To ensure that funds are spent appropriately, reports on actual payments to vendors include information on the vendors' race, gender and amount of payment. Schools must not tolerate corruption. Any misappropriation of funds should result in strict sanctions and penalties that start with removal from office.

DISTRICT OFFICIALS KNOW BEST? THINK AGAIN

The error of assuming that central administration or school board officials make the best decisions for schools played out in Chicago in 1993. That year, the district faced a $385 million deficit. The school board and the union agreed to slash teaching positions at the high schools by increasing the length of class periods and reducing the number of periods. In most high schools, the changes wrecked havoc on carefully designed education reforms. Although this decision was dictated by the need to save money, board members defended it as good education. They did not seek advice from staff or school councils on alternatives to this plan.

CHALLENGING BUDGET QUESTIONS

In creating individual school budgets, decentralized school systems will have to resolve issues involving budgeting salaries as well as accountability in pooling categorical funds.

Budgeting salaries: Presently, two schools with the same number of staff members could have widely different budgets — depending on staff experience and seniority. Because districts will be allocating funds based on student weighting and not on the amount of salaries the staff earns, school systems need to make district-wide policies on how salaries will be budgeted. Two possibilities arise: 1) Actual salaries could be budgeted for all positions, allowing schools with less expensive, less experienced staff to hire more staff for their money; or 2) Average salaries could be used, thus eliminating the incentive to hire less costly staff. Following a lawsuit that could have implications for this question, Los Angeles is under a court order to distribute experienced teachers equitably in every neighborhood.

Pooled funding: Decentralizing systems will have to be scrupulous in safeguarding the hard-earned rights of students who bring in special funding without recentralizing or re-regulating the schools.

Reformatted individual school budgets. School budgets are easy for the public to read and use. In addition, they reflect the school's priorities as determined by the school council. New York has taken some steps in this direction. New York's central office still determines the formulas for the 32 community sub-districts and the high schools. But in March 1992, for the first time, the central office began publishing an annual report of how sub-districts allocate funds to schools and, in general, what the schools do with the funds.

Revised allocation formulas. Funds are allocated to schools using a weighted system that addresses individual school needs. Each student is weighted according to need, and funding is calculated by multiplying the weighted enrollment by the per-pupil allocation.

A school with 782 low-income students, for example, might have a weighted enrollment of 1,057 students. It then would receive funds that equal 1,057 times the per-pupil allocation. A small percentage of funds would be allocated through special grants, rather than through weighted funding. This percentage would include grants to small schools to equalize fixed costs.

In order to arrive at the per-pupil allocation, grants and school fees for mandated central services would be subtracted from the district's total operating fund. Then this number would be divided by the weighted student population.

Pooled funds. Currently, many funds, especially categorical funds, come with stringent spending requirements. Some of them make sense; others don't. By pooling many of these funds, school staff and local councils have far more flexibility to create a spending plan that meets the needs of all its students.

In addition, the change reduces layers of central office bureaucracy by eliminating separate departments that oversee categorical funds. The district replaces these departments with one equity department that ensures students who generate special funding are benefiting. It is essential that rigorous accountability measures are implemented for the school as well.

III. CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

In city after city in America, large, impersonal school bureaucracies are running large, impersonal schools. And these schools are increasingly failing students, especially students from low-income families and young people of color.

In these schools, teachers and students who aren't in the same classroom may not ever see or speak to each other. Students do not have the sense of pride in their school that is present in small schools. Disrespect and violence take its place.

Most of these students are not challenged, especially those who are minorities or who come from low-income families. They enter elementary school only slightly behind other students but fall further behind as they progress through the grades. This process begins as early as kindergarten or first grade, when children are often labeled according to their language abilities. The "top" groups are exposed to interesting books and active discussion, while the "lower" groups spend their time completing unchallenging drills and repetitive exercises.

These tracks harden as young people move through the grades, sorting students on the basis of perceived ability. The tracking process reinforces itself. The students' work continues to consist of unchallenging and repetitive exercises. And their assessment continues to be based on standardized exams used to measure low-level skills or to sort students.

As University of Illinois Professor Bill Ayers wrote in his recent essay, *What Counts?* "Standardized tests can't measure initiative, creativity, imagination, conceptual thinking, curiosity, effort, irony, judgment, commitment, nuance, goodwill (or) ethical reflection. What they can measure and count are isolated skills, specific facts and functions, the least interesting and least significant aspects of learning."

If individual teachers, principals or schools try to change these patterns, however, they generally meet resistance from within the school or from the district. In many schools, innovation is discouraged by regulations and by the culture of conformity. Curriculum, for example, is often adopted by the district for all schools. This means there is no expectation that teachers will develop their own curriculum to spark their students' interests.

Even in the few schools where teachers are encouraged to try new ideas, they are limited by time and professional development opportunities. The district routinely requires them to attend one-time workshops that may have nothing to do with their school's curricular and instructional plans. At the same time, lack of resources prevents them from attending more relevant workshops. Teaching is a reflective practice requiring teachers' full attention and energy. But teachers have few opportunities to meet or work with other teachers, to share ideas, or to reflect on and improve their craft.

When all of these circumstances are reversed, however, student achievement takes a dramatic turn. In Philadelphia, for instance, in those large neighborhood high schools that split successfully into smaller "charter" schools, 200 to 400 students work consistently with 10 to 15 teachers. The teachers are active in designing curriculum, organizing the students' time and maintaining relations with students and parents. The result: improved attendance and student achievement. In 1991, for example, 74 percent of 10th-graders passed English and 67 percent passed math. That was an increase from the pre-charter school tally in 1989 when only 62 percent of 10th-graders passed English and 58 percent passed math.

In many schools, innovation is discouraged by regulations and by the culture of conformity.

In Philadelphia, large high schools have split into smaller "charter" schools in which 200 to 400 students work with 10 to 15 teachers.

The Vision

A system of successful schools transforms teaching and learning in a number of ways. It reduces school size; places authority over curriculum and instruction at the school; demands high standards, challenging classwork and rigorous assessment; encourages innovation; and promotes professional development opportunities.

Schools with more than 500 students, for instance, split into smaller schools, allowing teachers to know students and their individual needs. Schools are characterized by high academic expectations for all students without exception.

Curricular and instructional authority is vested at the schools. All segments of these schools — teachers, the principal, parents, community members and students — work together to develop a challenging curriculum based on high standards. Teachers dramatically decrease their use of low-level-skill tests and repetitive drills. Instead, they evaluate student work using assessment methods, such as portfolios of student work, journals and student-produced publications, that measure a range of abilities. Schools encourage teachers to explore new assessment methods and, working within curricular guidelines, to adapt lessons to their students' interests.

To support this innovation and improve teaching and learning, the time during the school day and week is reorganized to provide teachers with planning time and peer discussion sessions. This ongoing conversation allows teachers to help each other in areas such as student work, as well as to discuss questions of discipline, heterogeneity, mainstreaming and special needs.

To enhance intellectual, personal and community resources, each school has regular working relationships with external networks. These networks might link schools, offer options on curriculum development, support ongoing professional development, or help teachers develop performance-based methods of assessing students. Schools also work with community members and groups to use other resources, such as off-campus learning opportunities.

Schools neither track nor label young people. All school staff commit to ensuring that all students are offered and succeed in a curriculum that is academically demanding.

Making the Vision a Reality

ABOLISH:

- Schools with more than 500 students
- One-shot, required staff development courses that are selected by administrators and are unrelated to teachers' curricular and instructional needs.
- School schedules without ample, consistent time for professional development.
- One-size-fits-all curriculum decreed from above.
- School cultures that discourage innovation and punish risk-takers.
- Standardized, multiple-choice tests as the sole source of assessment.
- Labeling and tracking young people as methods of organizing instruction.
- Passive seatwork assignments; unchallenging, repetitive drills.

ESTABLISH:

Small learning communities. In our vision, districts and schools establish small learning communities at all schools with more than 500 students. In these small schools, 200 to 400 students work with 10 to 15 teachers.

These communities may be several schools within one large school building (schools-within-schools) or new, individual schools. Without exception, however, each school has high academic

expectations for all students, and school leaders foster an atmosphere of cooperation and respect. Research shows that students in small learning communities outperform their peers on standard indicators of attendance, course passage, high school completion and college enrollment.

In our experience in urban schools, small learning communities also help reduce violence and conflict among students while increasing post-secondary aspirations, teacher expectations and community involvement.

School-based authority for curriculum and instruction. Communities trust their own teachers, principals, parents and other residents to make academic decisions within a framework of high standards. School councils take the lead in this effort, creating annual school development plans that foster a culture of continuously improving curriculum, instruction and professional development (see Section I, Governance).

Interdisciplinary teams of teachers work with the principal, parents, community members and students to develop an integrated and intellectually challenging curriculum for each school. They use curricular frameworks based on high standards and best practice. And they incorporate into the curriculum multicultural world views, respect for diverse cultures, and foreign languages.

Each school continually revises its curriculum based on its students' needs. Teachers tailor instructional methods to subject matter and student learning styles. They take risks and are supported by the principal and other staff. Students, teachers and the principals try new ideas, discuss them with colleagues, then discard or improve them. To take on these responsibilities, school staff have regular access to information about best practices and successful programs.

To enhance students' educational opportunities, school and community resources complement each other. Schools call on local residents and parents to talk about their culture, their work and other areas based on their expertise and experience. In many cases, classes are held at neighborhood sites, such as museums or local businesses.

School-based commitment to equity. Teachers and principals need to review their practices through a lens of equity and fairness for all students. Armed with disaggregated data by race, ethnicity and socio-economic status, local school councils take a hard look at how well all young people are learning and insist on high-level achievement for all. The site council eliminates tracking and supports heterogeneous grouping based on research and exemplary practice. Schools encourage parents to talk with teachers about their child's learning style and program options.

School-based authority for assessment. Teachers commit to conducting an ongoing assessment of student progress. They analyze what and how they are teaching, and they collect and review student data and information, including how individual students learn. They assess student success with a variety of methods that measure both what young people know and can do. These methods might include portfolios of student work, quick checklists, anecdotal records, journals, observations and discussions with team teachers, mentors and parents. Students, meanwhile, assess their own and fellow students' progress. Teachers may use traditional testing or new forms of assessment, but they review test results within a broad context of information about students.

Assessment in a high-standards school system requires teachers to invest energy and time. They need time to write and gather assessment materials and to evaluate student performance. They also need time to reflect on whether their curriculum is proving effective.

A SPECIAL ROLE FOR NETWORKS

Most schools that are actively engaged in improving teaching and learning are members of a network. Networks are a little-discussed, but important, aspect of education reform that help schools in a variety of areas.

Some networks are local. Some community-based networks provide schools with a variety of off-campus learning environments. Other community networks and civic associations link parents to schools, or they integrate schools into neighborhood activities. Community groups may organize parents to work together on school reform issues. They conduct leadership development training (see Section I, Governance). Educational networks support groups of schools working together.

Other networks address teaching and may focus on a particular subject area or assessment method. In recent years, some of these networks have become powerful tools for professional development. They organize teachers to visit classrooms in

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other schools, then provide time for the teachers to discuss strategies. They help teachers share training or work together within or across schools.

Some networks are national. The Algebra Project, the Coalition of Essential Schools, the National Writing Project, and the Comer Project for Change in Education, for example, provide both philosophical and practical support to schools. National experts work within and across schools with teachers who are working to improve their teaching practices.

Time and money for professional growth and development. The district and individual schools provide the time and money necessary to give educators ongoing and meaningful opportunities to think, plan, experiment and improve (see Section IV, Personnel). Teachers have additional time during the regular school day and week to develop curriculum, instruction and assessment. As part of their professional development, they routinely share "best practices" concerning equity, standards, and teaching and learning. They invite other teachers, teacher leaders, university staff and community members to join the discussion. And schools form clusters to share staff members, work together on curriculum and assessment, or provide peer mentoring.

Expanded use of networks. Individual schools regularly create and use networks that allow them to benefit from the resources of other schools, community organizations or professional education institutions. (See "A Special Role For Networks," page 13.)

IV. PERSONNEL

In most urban districts today, personnel functions are heavily centralized, distancing staffing decisions from school needs and making the selection process complex and slow.

Research and experience show that principals and staff who are selected, trained, nurtured and supported by their own school are critical to successful learning communities. When staff are assigned arbitrarily, they may never connect with the school's goals and culture. They are often unhappy and the school's vision is diluted.

Hiring rules and regulations are also a problem. In most schools, even those with authority to hire staff, seniority is the sole hiring criterion. Merit may be forced to take a back seat.

This type of counter-productive regulation — whether by the school district, unions, state or federal government — also occurs in teacher termination. Removing ineffective or inadequate teachers becomes a problem whenever state law and contractual procedures — designed to protect teachers against arbitrary or punitive actions — make it too difficult to remove failing teachers.

Currently, administrative supervisors handle teacher termination along with evaluation and promotion. The evaluations are often perfunctory because of lack of time or priority, or the supervisor's distance from the classroom. An opportunity to improve teaching and learning is lost.

Current methods of preparation for teachers and administrators are inadequate and ineffective. The typical single semester of student teaching is not enough to provide adequate site-based preparation for new teachers. The majority of a teacher's training is not based in schools and it is often outmoded and irrelevant. In addition, the university monopoly over training educators and setting requirements discourages many people from entering the profession. With some additional training, people who have pursued other careers could bring fresh ideas to the classroom.

The Vision

In our model, all substantive personnel functions are carried out at the school level by school staff, parents and representatives of the school's community. A skeletal central district office maintains minimal functions.

To serve students and their families well, local school councils have the authority to select their principals. The principal has authority over recruiting, training, selecting, assigning, assessing and promoting staff.

This shifting of power has already occurred in Chicago where the city's 1988 school reform law gave local school councils the authority to select principals directly, and after four years, decide whether to renew their contracts or dismiss them. By opening up the selection process, new leaders have emerged, and principals are now more representative of their communities and their students. Since 1989, some 40 percent of the elementary schools have made substantial improvements, in great part because of new school leadership and local site authority.

With improved teaching as a major goal in this model, extended and intensive practical experience become part of teacher preparation. An experienced mentor-teacher supervises beginning teachers, and schools provide ample opportunity for staff to reflect on strategies and challenges with peers and mentors. To the extent possible, school and university faculty working together provide the accompanying course work

To serve students and their families well, local school councils in our vision have the authority to select their principals. The principal has authority over recruiting, training, selecting, assigning, assessing and promoting staff.

on teaching theory, knowledge and practice at the school site. Rigorous state teacher certification standards support strong school-site, practice-based performance.

Districts and schools, meanwhile, develop clear statements on the expectations, skills and capacities they seek in new teachers. They also work in collaboration with higher education institutions to shape the school-based preparation that meets those goals. In addition, they actively recruit teachers and administrators of color.

At the same time, alternatives to university schools of education — such as alternative entry, apprenticeship training and school-based professional development — are encouraged and they become routine. People seeking a mid-career change into teaching are welcome, with flexible methods of on-the-job training and certification.

Schools carry out teacher hiring and retention. They recognize that staff stability and continuity are essential to sustaining strong school communities. They also encourage experimentation in teacher and advisor roles. Schools ensure staff composition to address their individual educational needs, but they use this authority within the law and with special attention to equal opportunity hiring. Working with the district, they adapt seniority and transfer policies to fit their educational needs. In addition, schools have the authority to hire, assess, and if necessary, terminate custodians and other school staff.

The schools are able to move the majority of staff and resources into classrooms, and they have flexible dollars for professional development.

The schools are able to move the majority of staff and resources into classrooms, and they have flexible dollars for professional development. These resources are concentrated at the school level. Schools spend them to deepen teachers' knowledge of their specialty areas and to improve teaching.

Teachers' unions and other professional groups also have a key role. They are committed to leading system-wide improvement in policy and practice, as well as supporting and protecting their members. The district negotiates master contracts with a wide range of options for individual schools on items such as class size, number and extent of non-teaching periods (preps) and duties, mentoring duties, scheduling, staff selection, transfer policy, rotation of staff assignments, and compensation for work before and after school. These contracts are negotiated using bargaining techniques that foster collaborative relationships between the teachers' union and management.

Making the Vision a Reality

ABOLISH:

- The central office monopoly over hiring principals, teachers and other staff.
- The bureaucratic central office hiring procedures.
- The university monopoly over teacher preparation.
- The outdated, rigid and duplicative rules and protections of the school system, unions, and state and federal governments.
- Teachers' seniority rights, unmediated by educational need, that create instructional difficulties in schools.
- The proliferation of "supervisors" of all types who work outside the classroom.
- Custodial "control" of buildings.

ESTABLISH:

New methods of preparing administrators and teachers. In our model, universities and colleges must provide beginning teachers and administrators

with school-based training. This could include internships, teacher mentoring, and teaching and learning networks, coupled with intensive weekend and summer coursework and peer counseling. Practical experience working with peers and young people is critical to new teachers' development.

School-based recruitment, hiring, assignment and development. People at the school level have authority for these functions. Locally selected school councils hire the principal, the person in charge of implementing the school development plan and most accountable, along with staff and students, for achieving the results. They also have the authority to evaluate his or her performance annually. Every four years, councils decide whether to retain their principal or select a new one, thereby abolishing principal tenure.

The principal and local councils work together to develop school-based selection criteria for teachers and other personnel. In each city, a central recruiting office creates a district-wide pool of new teachers. Schools select from these pools or seek out other individuals who will make a strong addition to their teaching staff.

In all cases, personnel decisions follow the law and established procedures that ensure open competition and diversity. The central office has the responsibility of doing background checks of potential teaching candidates. It also has a special responsibility to ensure that adequate numbers of teachers of color, and bilingual and special education teachers are on staff and available for openings.

According to current estimates, teachers of color will comprise only five percent of the national teaching pool by the year 2000. Central offices, working with their national associations, must supplement district minority recruiting with support for measures such as the following: a new national initiative to provide scholarships for teacher preparation, national service teacher internships, and active recruitment of mid-career professionals. The district must also pursue measures to increase minority high school graduation and college attendance rates.

School-specific continuity and stability are an overriding principle of personnel practices. Seniority and transfer policies need not conflict with the efforts of schools to build teaching staffs committed to particular missions, beliefs and practices. Whenever threats of staff disruption make schools vulnerable, especially when citywide fiscal deficits precipitate teacher cuts, schools must be able to secure and maintain their chosen staffs.

New York is one city now using school-based hiring. Secondary schools in the city's Center for Collaborative Education network and other groups worked with the union to develop peer hiring procedures. These procedures were the basis for peer hiring practices in 30 new secondary schools, known as New Visions and Campus Coalition schools. With advocacy from the teachers' union and school reform networks, the process is now part of a new staffing and transfer policy.

To improve practice, teachers need time, resources and professional development in the context of their schools. Teachers at the school level must have the overall responsibility for professional growth and development, with appropriate forms of accountability to ensure effectiveness. They need time as a full faculty to work on questions of teaching and learning.

Teacher assessment, evaluation and termination. Following the lead of many teachers unions, school systems need to negotiate new or expedited procedures for improving, counseling or

CHALLENGING PERSONNEL QUESTIONS

In building a quality decentralized school system, educators and community residents will face several dilemmas in deciding personnel and contractual issues. For example:

How do schools reconcile the need to select staff most appropriate for their programs and philosophy with the rights of senior staff who apply for a position?

Can principals be held accountable for student improvement if they cannot directly select or dismiss staff?

What is the relationship of peer review and teachers' possible loss of jobs?

To date, urban reform programs have dealt with these issues in a variety of ways. In New York, for instance, the district and the teachers' union agreed to allow schools with specialized instructional programs — including new small schools — to hire their own staff based on the schools' educational needs. In Denver, committees made up of three teachers and the principal must interview the two most senior applicants for a position,

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but they are not obligated to select either. In Chicago, principals can select teachers without regard to seniority although senior teachers without positions maintain certain contractual rights.

The issue of contracts leads to another concern in a decentralized system. Although various stakeholders are directly affected by employee contract provisions, those contracts are made between employees and management. Should representatives of groups other than the employees and management be at the bargaining table?

ultimately removing failing teachers. In Seattle, for instance, the teachers' union has taken the lead in establishing STAR. This peer group counsels new teachers and teachers who need help. STAR also counsels under-performing teachers to leave the system. A similar peer intervention program was negotiated by the teachers' union in New York City in 1987.

Protecting teachers' rights is compatible with ensuring that all students receive high quality instruction. Teachers unions, school districts and school councils work together to develop actions that correct poor teaching, remove ineffective teachers and close failing schools. In this way, protecting students and protecting good teaching are primary goals of education.

Union collaboration. Teacher union leaders are active in creating citywide collaborative reform efforts to improve teaching and learning. Such efforts support schools undergoing reform and improve inadequate schools. The union-reform group collaborative agenda also includes the collective bargaining process; modification of the basic contract based on waiver requests from schools; review of teacher tenure, transfer and seniority provisions; and review of teachers salaries in the current competitive context.

V. FACILITIES AND SERVICES

There is a strong connection between the schools' educational programs, their facilities, and the services they receive such as purchasing, repairs, transportation and food programs. The schools' programmatic needs should determine how the buildings are designed and used. They should determine how services are provided. Just the opposite happens.

Schools trying to provide innovative programs, such as on-site child care, may run up against central office restrictions. Others, trying to increase parental and community involvement, may face regulations requiring them to lock their doors in mid-afternoon. For routine maintenance, they are at the mercy of their custodians. Major repairs and maintenance often go undone for years, causing disgraceful physical conditions, as budget constraints and central office red tape continually backlog repairs.

Most urban schools are dependent on central office purchases, repairs and contractual services. Principals complain of long delays and endless paperwork. Vendors complain of unpaid bills. Small companies stop working with the districts because they can't carry the debt for months at a time. At other times, vendors increase costs to make up for payment delays. A 1993 study of Chicago Public Schools' purchasing practices found that vendors included a 37 percent add-on cost over the normal purchase price for many items.

On other occasions, custodial contracts limit the use of buildings and attempts to obtain better services. In Denver, for instance, two schools saved $30,000 by working together to privately transport six special-education children. The $30,000 was to fund an art teacher and additional classroom paraprofessionals. But the central office is now reviewing this decision. The union contract requires that student transportation vehicles be "national school-bus yellow," and operated by union drivers.

The Vision

In our model, the school's policy, mission and programs determine how facilities and services are designed and managed. Decisions about facilities and services shift to the school. At the school council's discretion, school buildings are used in a variety of innovative and community-oriented ways. Under-used buildings, for instance, share space and resources with community and city services. Councils may rent a portion of the building to a community group. School buildings are community centers open from early morning until late at night, sometimes 24 hours a day.

In purchasing services, such as staff development consultants, maintenance and repairs, the central office no longer holds a monopoly. Principals have the authority to choose those services and determine who provides them. The central office competes for school contracts. To support community economic development, schools purchase from neighborhood businesses if they offer competitive fees and services.

But school buildings are not the only site for teaching and learning. The community provides innumerable sites for educational activities.

In this new system of facility use and school purchasing authority, equity among schools is a primary consideration, but it does not necessarily mean "the same for everyone." The central office provides leadership in convening school council members and others to address issues such as overcrowded schools and the maintenance of older facilities.

Custodial contract negotiations, meanwhile, make student services and

Most urban schools are dependent on central office purchases, repairs and contractual services. Principals complain of long delays and endless paperwork. Vendors complain of unpaid bills.

SURVEY SAYS: LIMIT CENTRALIZED SERVICES

A 1992 random sample survey of Chicago local school councils showed that all categories of members — teachers, parents, community members and principals — preferred a minimal central administration role in most areas. Members wanted the school to have control over repair dollars and to choose who performs the repairs. They also wanted authority to purchase directly from vendors, to keep the schools open from early morning until late at night, and to schedule the maintenance staff. About 50 percent wanted to select, contract with and supervise food vendors, and about 50 percent wanted to contract with and supervise transportation. They did not want to handle payroll or background checks on personnel.

community access to buildings top priorities. To ensure that all stakeholders are represented, contract negotiations include community representatives.

Making the Vision a Reality

ABOLISH:

- Union contracts that dictate the use of public schools.
- The central office's service monopoly.
- The central office's exclusive control of contracting.
- The over-reliance on notions of economies of scale.

ESTABLISH:

A reformed central office role. In our vision, central office departments are entrepreneurial, competing with other vendors to provide services. By existing only to serve school needs, departments that perform useful services quickly and cost-effectively continue to grow.

The school board eliminates regulations governing facilities and services that interfere with the schools' authority in this area. Exemplary schools, pilot projects, and charter schools may provide models for decentralizing various areas of facilities and services.

School-based budget control over facilities and services. Schools are free to shop for the best prices and for the most effective and efficient services. Control over facility and service allocations are part of moving overall budget authority to individual schools (see Section II, Budgets). The school staff and the school council can then prioritize decisions about the facilities and services the school needs.

The school keeps funds generated by renting building space or providing extended services such as child care. The principal intentionally buys locally, when services are competitive, providing an incentive for neighborhood economic development. The council issues an annual spending report listing vendors by name, race and gender.

School-based contracting authority. Schools not only have budget authority, but also contracting control. Principals choose their facility and service providers, whether those providers are central office departments or private firms. Schools cluster to share resources such as nurses. They save money by staggering school hours and bus schedules.

Economies of speed. We need to revisit the notion of economies of scale: that large bulk purchasing is necessarily the cheapest and best way to purchase goods and services. When a few large companies dominated their industries (the automobile industry is an example), productivity was defined by high volume, low cost and standardized production. The global economy has changed this. Economies of speed — getting what you want when you want it — often outweighs alleged economies of scale.

In truth, time can be as important as cost, and bulk-rates are not always cheaper. Consider the case of a Chicago school needing a new VCR. When the clerk called the central office for a price, it was negotiating a bulk rate contract with its VCR vendor. The central office couldn't give a price for another two weeks, and purchase and delivery would take an additional six to eight weeks. The school opted to buy a VCR on sale from a local store and received it within 24 hours. The price was $75 less than the bulk price eventually negotiated by the central office.

As individual schools take over purchasing, speed, price and quality are all important. For those items that are cheaper through bulk purchasing, the

central office can broker with companies for a unit price while still allowing schools to purchase individually. Clusters of schools can purchase goods and services collectively.

In Denver, Philadelphia and Seattle, school and business leaders have begun discussing "just-in-time" or "drop-ship" delivery and other ways of downsizing huge, inefficient warehouse operations. Denver is also studying privatization and competitive service delivery in the wake of a budget deficit. The school district is considering this change for copier service, maintenance, purchasing and food service.

School-based authority for maintenance and repairs. School authority to manage the budget, contract for services, and make purchases also extends to repairs and maintenance. Schools are able to prioritize their own needs and address them. Some districts have taken steps in this area, but the overall lack of funds for repairs and rehabilitation has limited their success.

Other districts are interested in privatizing cleaning and maintenance services. Under a recently negotiated New York Public Schools contract, a school can employ a private cleaning firm after the current chief custodian retires or transfers. Ten percent of New York's schools are now cleaned by private contractors.

Other cities, however, such as Edmonton, Alberta in Canada, have found that when schools are free to choose maintenance providers, the district's maintenance staff generally is selected. They become very competitive and provide the best services.

Creative uses of school facilities. Because school buildings are often one of the few large, safe buildings in city neighborhoods, they are open for community use from early morning until late at night. As space allows, school buildings routinely house multiple student and community services, such as libraries, child care centers, health clinics and after-school recreational programs.

The services cited above help revitalize urban schools by drawing in non-education funds, such as Medicaid and city parks and recreation funds. Innovative uses like these for schools, which are public facilities already paid for with tax dollars, should be commonplace.

In addition, school buildings are not confined to traditional one-school, isolated learning environments. Large school buildings house four or five smaller schools. Schools are also located in a variety of urban sites. Four different school districts in metropolitan Denver developed one such site across school district boundaries, the Experiential Learning School.

In New York, the Beacons initiative has established 37 community centers operating in schools. These centers, managed by community organizations, offer services and activities for youth and adults seven days and evenings a week. The city uses children's services funds to pay for the program. In Seattle, the city passed a tax levy to fund school-based children's social services and thereby freed up education funds for classroom use.

In addition to creative uses of school buildings, community facilities and sites are used in non-traditional ways. For example, a community site may provide a curricular focus. In New York, the El Puente Academy for Peace and Justice uses sites in the neighborhood that have sustained environmental damage to develop curriculum for environmental education and action.

In Denver, Philadelphia and Seattle, school and business leaders have begun discussing "just-in-time" or "drop-ship" delivery and other ways of downsizing huge, inefficient warehouse operations.

VI. ACCOUNTABILITY

Across the country we have heard principals and teachers say, "Give us the authority and resources to do our job, and we will take responsibility for the results."

Politicians as well as superintendents talk about accountability constantly. Its meaning changes to fit the situation. At the state level, accountability usually means punishment — closing schools, denying funds or placing districts on remediation, ready for state take-over. At the district level, it means stringent oversight to ensure adherence to regulations. At the school level, accountability means compliance and conformity.

In most districts, accountability measures hold people more responsible for following rules than for achieving results.

Because achievement and resource information are centrally controlled, school staff, parents and community members have no meaningful way to monitor their own school's progress or failure. Instead of enabling the school to be responsible for student achievement, the district resorts to blanket rules and regulations that merely generate time-consuming paperwork, not improvement. In most districts, accountability measures hold people more responsible for following rules than for achieving results.

Accountability systems are more than just student test scores and attendance rates. An accountability system should tell parents and students, staff and the public how students are doing and what improvements are needed; how money is being spent and on what; how staff are hired and supported; and how students and parents perceive the school.

The Vision

While decentralized accountability resides primarily at the school, the district and state have critical responsibilities. In our vision, there are five fundamental elements of an accountability system: outcome standards, assessment, practices, resources (or inputs) and resultant actions. The fundamental elements and questions they raise are:

1. Outcome standards: What should students know and be able to do?
2. Assessment: How do we know if resources (staff, funds, supplies) have been adequately provided and outcomes achieved?
3. Practices: How are schools, districts and states going about improving student performance?
4. Resources: What must be provided and from whom?
5. Resultant Actions: When schools and districts need help or aren't working, what should be done and by whom?

By answering each of these questions at the school, district and state level, we begin to describe a decentralized accountability system.

Schools are responsible for:

- Developing school standards and goals for what students should know and be able to do
- Providing all students with high quality programs
- Equitably distributing resources (staff, funds, supplies)
- Assessing and reporting on how well students are achieving on local, district and state standards
- Assessing and reporting on uses of resources
- Correcting policies and practices that aren't working

Districts are responsible for:

- Setting district-wide goals and standards

- Developing and reporting on district outcome measurements
- Supporting the development of successful teaching and school practices
- Equitably distributing resources
- Intervening in failing schools
- Enforcing equity standards

States are responsible for:

- Setting broad goals and standards for all schools
- Providing ample resources so standards can be achieved
- Conducting random, selective standardized tests
- Ensuring equitable school finance throughout the state
- Intervening in districts that are failing children

Making the Vision a Reality

ABOLISH:

- The practice, at all levels, of not taking responsibility for student outcomes
- The myth that central offices ensure accountability
- The evaluation of schools and districts based solely on standardized tests and following procedures
- The use of tests measuring low-level skills
- The reliance on insufficient or unusable data to monitor progress
- The dependence on districts as sole distributors of accountability data

ESTABLISH:

The school as the primary site of accountability. In a decentralized system, school staff take primary responsibility for student achievement. They work with students, parents and community members to develop local standards. These local standards are embedded within district and state goals and standards. Schools set their own overall educational goals in their school development plans (see Section I, Governance).

A primary role for school councils is to help determine the measures of school success and achievement. These measures involve monitoring student achievement and use of resources, as well as the school's progress in meeting other school, district or state goals. They evaluate whether school policies support best practices, such as allowing school staff sufficient time for collective problem solving.

The local councils also play a key role in assessing and acting upon the results. After analyzing student achievement data and consulting with the teachers and the principal, the councils use that information to chart their educational goals and action plan for the following year. At least once a year, the local school council provides a public report outlining the school's progress and the use of taxpayer money. This ensures that council members remain accountable to the community.

Within schools, teachers are accountable for diagnosing and assessing individual student performance. They also evaluate their own practice and, based on their findings, continually revise their strategies to improve student learning. Schools must have flexibility, however, in developing these assessments. For instance, groups of schools may wish to work together to develop their own assessment strategies. As long as they are consistent with state and district assessment requirements, these alternatives should be recognized and may be shared with other schools.

A primary role for local school councils is to help determine the measures of school success and achievement.

"From what I've seen, the school-quality review is the antithesis of a check-list mentality to whipping schools into shape. During the entire week (of the review), I never saw anyone ask a question about how the school was implementing this or that rule or regulation. Instead, the focus was unremittingly — and refreshingly — on students and their learning."

— New York Quality Review team member, *Education Week*

The school district's role of support and oversight. School districts exist primarily to support the development of effective schools for all children. To this end, they work within broad state guidelines to set district goals and standards. One of the district's major responsibilities is to collect a wide range of school data, compile it, and make it available to every school. Like individual schools, the district provides the public with data measuring school progress. This will keep both schools and districts accountable for student progress.

In providing accountability data, however, the district's primary role is as a support service to schools. It uses this data to encourage, not disparage, schools that are undergoing educational change and improvement. If the data shows that a school has made mistakes, the district refrains from their current tendency to create rules to prevent others from making the same mistake.

When individual schools consistently fail to meet goals or abide by equity standards, however, the district has the authority to intervene. Districts provide these schools with support from peers in successful schools, by calling in staff from independent organizations or universities, or through other support measures. If the school still does not improve, the district may override the school's own decision-making process to take action. It may consider school reorganization or even school closing, but it should ensure that its sanctions do not harm or punish students.

The state's role as standard-creator, funder and final authority. States assist districts by creating broad student achievement standards, then providing the resources necessary to help its youth meet these standards. State funding must not only be adequate, it must ensure equity among districts.

States, as well as districts and schools, encourage a school culture of self-assessment and review. New York state, for example, created school quality review teams. These teams of parents, educators and community members have been trained to assist school staff to look at their own practices and plans for improvement.

As one New York Quality Review team member told *Education Week:* "From what I've seen, the school-quality review is the antithesis of a check-list mentality to whipping schools into shape. During the entire week (of the review), I never saw anyone ask a question about how the school was implementing this or that rule or regulation. Instead, the focus was unremittingly — and refreshingly — on students and their learning."

States assume a relatively distant but necessary oversight relationship with districts. They monitor district progress by conducting random, selective and minimal standardized tests. If a district fails its children by providing sub-standard education or inequitable opportunities for quality education, the state has the final authority and responsibility to intervene.

A supporting data base. Local school councils and school staff have regular access to information that reveals how the school is progressing. They use this information to determine when corrective action is necessary and what type of action to take. As mentioned above, a key to a good accountability system is a data base that is accessible and reliable. The district produces school information, in a timely manner, that the public can easily obtain and digest. This information is available over each school's office computer.

This data base includes at least information on the following topics:

Student achievement results and equity. Graduation and attendance rates; assessment and testing information; courses needed for college, offered and taken; student mobility and college completion; and job placement status. All this data is disaggregated by race, gender, language, student disability and low-income status.

Resources. Individual school funding levels and the amount of discretion schools have over these funds; facilities and space provisions; distribution of experienced staff; staff certification, seniority and turnover; support staff levels.

Practices. The extent of ongoing professional development including the amount of time and resources for staff development; teacher discretion over instructional programs and assessment; teachers knowledge and use of exemplary teaching practices; and safety in and around schools.

Parent and community engagement. The roles of parents at the school; school practices and policies that welcome family and community participation; quality of the school's communication with parents; community economic development due to local school spending or other school activities; involvement of community organizations in school activities; school involvement in community activities; and school governance councils outreach to parents and community.

CHALLENGING ACCOUNTABILITY QUESTIONS

How can methods of assessing student progress balance conflicting points of view about what kind of tests and assessments to use?

Many reformers reject the sole use of standardized tests because they measure rote memorization and lower-level thinking skills. Instead, they support a variety of assessments that rigorously measure what students know and can do, such as student-produced journals, publications and portfolios.

However, other reformers who are parents and community leaders of color feel that standardized tests represent prevailing achievement expectations and are necessary entrees to colleges and universities.

Decentralized schools will have to consider how the push for rigorous, alternative methods of assessment can be reconciled with the desire of many community residents to maintain standardized tests.

THE DANGER OF RECENTRALIZATION

How Plans Can Go Astray

Large bureaucracies find it hard to change how they work. They will 'give' authority to schools but then take actions that clearly show that authority still rests at the central office. Even if authority is moved to schools, it is often done in half-measures. Although sometimes unintended, central offices have a strong tendency to recentralize. Whether in curriculum and instruction, personnel, budgets, governance or facilities, this tendency threatens all aspects of decentralization. The result is that power shifts from schools back to a central authority. We call it creeping recentralization. Here are some red flags:

- Demands for identical or centrally adopted curriculum, based on concerns about school-to-school "articulation."
- Reorganizing school districts into school clusters that form mid-level bureaucracies, shifting resources and decision-making to these new bureaucracies from the schools.
- Schools that win authority over hiring their own staff, then face narrow assertions of seniority as the sole hiring criterion.
- A willingness to decentralize budgets only when resources are inadequate.
- Although central office services are being cut, the span of control often is not, causing a double problem: schools still can't do what they want nor can they get help from the central office.
- A rush to judge decentralization, based on progress on student achievement. Districts should remember that centralization has never been tested on this basis. They should resist premature judgments and efforts to rebuild a centralized district.
- Attempts to reduce participatory governance because of high levels of conflict. The trend toward democracy in school governance has opened the once underground conflicts about equity, standards, teachers, students, race and class. Local school councils may need assistance in managing tensions, but public debate is a by-product of a healthy democracy. Serious change has never occurred without conflict.

Public debate is a by-product of a healthy democracy. Serious change has never occurred without conflict.

CONCLUSION

Our Challenge

Members of the Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform have come together, motivated by crisis and hope. The current conditions in which far too many city children live, especially children of color and those whose families are poor, are intolerable. Economic injustice and lack of work have forced families to live in poverty, in settings filled with violence and drugs. Yet all communities have assets and strengths — intellectual, spiritual, cultural and physical — that provide the essential building blocks for raising children and revitalizing community life.

Public schools are central to this hope as the institution that carries forward a vision of democracy, justice and inclusion — grounded in community and invested in young people. We all have a stake in the millions of young people growing up in cities and attending public schools. The work over the next decade is to make the visions described in this paper a reality.

APPENDIX

On the following pages, we have compiled summary charts and lists that we hope will be useful tools. Readers are welcome to reproduce these charts to use as hand-outs in spurring reform in their own communities. We only request that the Cross City Campaign and this monograph be sited as the source. The charts are as follows:

Appendix A, Decentralized School Authorty is an outline of powers that should be shifted to the school.

Appendix B, Decentralized Central Office Services is a summary of the functions still maintained in a reinvented central office.

Appendix C, The *Reinventing Central Office* executive summary lists the proposed roles for schools, districts and external groups in a decentralized system.

Appendix D, National Resources provides lists of groups and individuals with expertise in a range of areas, such as school-based budgeting, community involvement, and school-based governance.

APPENDIX A

DECENTRALIZED SCHOOL AUTHORITY

Schools are governed by democratically selected councils with authority over instructional programs, personnel, budget, and facilities and services. The council hires the principal (or lead teacher) who manages the school. Decentralized schools are the primary site for accountability. Central office functions are supported by a small tax on local schools' operating funds. The following is a list of school functions:

Governance
- Makes major policy decisions
- Determines school day, week
- Creates parent, community engagement programs

Budget
- Receives and manages 100 percent of district funds minus taxed services
- Receives school funding based on student weighting
- Contracts out services to central office or other vendors
- Reports to community on annual audit, other spending reports

Instructional Program
- Creates outcome standards
- Determines instructional program, curriculum, assessments and staff development
- Selects supplies/textbooks
- Provides staff development
- Contracts with vendors
- Carries out rigorous assessment of student achievement
- Meets district, state standards
- Reports progress to community

Personnel
- Recruits/selects and evaluates principal; terminates or retains principal
- Principal (or head teacher) recruits, selects, directs all staff
- Has flexibility over certain school working conditions

Facilities
- Determines use of school building
- Collects rent from outside usage
- Selects vendors for maintenance, repair

Accountability
- Reports on student outcomes, use of resources
- Ensures equitable learning experiences
- Develops local standards consistent with district, state

APPENDIX B

DECENTRALIZED CENTRAL OFFICE SERVICES

Most of the responsibilities of a reinvented central office include important categories such as: assuring equity, intervening in failing schools, and taking responsibility for significant or fluctuating costs so risk is spread among all schools. Schools are allocated 100 percent of their operating funds (excluding capital and debt) and are taxed to support certain central office functions. The following is a list of these functions.

Superintendent and School Board	Establishes broad goals, high standards, and learning objectives consistent with state guidelines.
Equity Assurance Office	Ensures that students with disabilities, those who are limited English proficient, children from low-income homes, and children of color are well served and succeeding.
Budget/Treasury Department	Extends levies, collects taxes, provides on-line budget information to schools, and provides schools with the operating funds.
Information Services	Connects schools to mainframe computer containing student and school information, reference data, lists of catalogues and vendors.
Legal/Insurance/Labor Unit	Handles litigation, insurance and centralized union contracts.
Personnel Office	Carries out background checks and recruits for shortages.
Data Collection and Analysis	Collects a variety of student/school data and provides information to schools and public (Could be contracted out).
Service Departments such as Payroll, Transportation and Food Services	Serves schools as long as service is satisfactory and competitive. Schools may want to contract out for these services and, therefore, would not be taxed for them.
Emergency Funds	Supports unpredictable events (extended illnesses, extraordinary energy costs, large non-capital repairs) and other costs not equally shared (recruitment for bilingual teachers).

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APPENDIX C

Reinventing Central Office

Executive Summary

GOVERNANCE

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY	DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITY	EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONS
• Democratically elected local school councils — comprised of parents, staff, community members, high school students and the principal — govern the schools. • School staff and site councils develop the annual improvement plan and school budget, reflecting local school council policy decisions. • School councils approve annual plans and budgets. • School councils hire, evaluate and make retention decisions about the principal. • School councils monitor the implementation of the school improvement plan. • School councils provide public reports on school progress, how funds are spent, and on school policies. • Parents and community members participate at all levels in the school, including governance.	• The district sets goals and standards. • The district oversees equitable school funding. • The district ensures that special need students are well served. • The district intervenes in failing schools and supports the ongoing work of schools.	• Parents, community organizations, universities, businesses, churches, social service agencies, and cultural organizations work with the schools, making them an active part of the community. • School staff participate in community activities. • Community and civic organizations provide training and support to local school councils.

BUDGET

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY	DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITY	EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONS
• Schools receive and control 100 percent of operating funds (excluding capital, debt) minus "taxes" paid to district for mandated services and special grants. Almost all school allocations are based on student weighting. • Schools must pay for annual audits of their own bank accounts. • Schools that do not spend all of their budget may roll those funds over to next year. Schools that overspend must deduct that amount from next year's budget. • Schools can pool categorical funds; they are accountable for serving all students. • Local school councils furnish parents and the community with annual audits and other spending reports.	• The district deposits school funds into school bank accounts. • The district allocates resources equitably to all schools. All budget information is on-line and understandable. • The budget office alerts schools when they are overspending and has the authority to intervene in serious cases. • The district handles district-wide budget reports, audits, tax levies and collections.	• Outside companies may enter into contracts with schools to provide services. • Community and civic organizations provide training and support to local school councils.

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CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION, AND ASSESSMENT

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY	DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITY	EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONS
• School staff make decisions about curriculum, materials, instructional strategies, assessment, and professional development. • Schools have the primary responsibility for student improvement by providing high quality and equitable learning experiences. • School staff and local school councils help determine indicators of student and school progress. • School staff report regularly on student and school progress to parents and school community. • Schools budget time for staff to collaborate and plan. • Schools purchase curricular and professional development support from outside organizations or the central office. • School staff and local school councils in large schools have the option of forming smaller schools-within-schools. • Schools do not label or track students.	• The district Office of Equity Assurance intercedes in schools not complying with consent decrees and equity requirements. • A district Intervention Office works with failing schools. Principals, staff, and/or councils are replaced if support and comprehensive intervention fail. • The district collects student and school data, or contracts out for this service. • Central office personnel and the research community help determine indicators of student and school progress. • The district provides disaggregated data on student and school progress to schools via computer, ensuring that all information can be easily accessed and manipulated.	• Clusters of schools and external networks — including universities, non-profits, community based organizations and private sector providers — provide support to individual schools. • An independent organization could contract with the district to collect and analyze information, then provide it to the schools and to the public.

PERSONNEL

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY	DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITY	EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONS
• Local school councils select principals and hire them under four-year performance contracts. • Principals and councils develop their own process for school-based staff selection and evaluation. • The school recruits new staff or pays the district for recruiting services. Schools must adhere to district diversity policies. • Schools obtain substitutes directly or use central office services for a fee. • Schools provide extensive, on-site preparation for student teachers.	• The district negotiates union contracts centrally with flexibility for individual school working conditions. • The district provides background and credential checks and salary/benefit determination. • The central office may contract with substitutes for subject areas and for schools that have difficulty finding substitutes. • Based on individual schools' requests, the central office may recruit and/or interview all candidates. • Central office personnel staff recruit for scarce positions, such as bilingual, special education teachers, and for teachers of color. • The central office handles payroll, workers compensation and insurance for a fee, or contracts out for those services. • The size of the central office staff depends on the market for their services among the schools.	• Outside organizations could enter into contracts to provide any of these district services.

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FACILITIES AND SERVICES

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY	DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITY	EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONS
• Schools determine their own hours and custodial schedules. • Schools house multiple student and community services, as space permits. • School programs are not necessarily in traditional school buildings. • Schools are available 24 hours a day for community use. • Schools purchase goods and services directly from vendors and are encouraged to use local businesses. Schools also are free to contract with central office departments. • Schools may cluster together to purchase materials and personnel. • Schools must meet affirmative action requirements. Local school council members must disclose ties to vendors and fill out conflict of interest statements annually.	• The district brokers with major companies to obtain discounts for bulk purchasing. • The district maintains an emergency pool of money for extraordinary and unexpected expenses, such as fire, flood damage or roof repairs. • The district service staff competes with outside vendors for maintenance contracts.	• Outside organizations could contract with schools to provide services such as maintenance, repairs, security, transportation and food services. • City health, recreation, library, police departments, and other city and community organizations and agencies work with the schools by providing direct services and sometimes by sharing school buildings.

ACCOUNTABILITY

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITY	DISTRICT RESPONSIBILITY	THE STATE
• Schools create school-based standards through discussions with the broader school community. These standards are consistent with district and state achievement standards. • Schools equitably distribute resources, providing all students with high quality and equitable learning experiences. • Schools assess student progress and report on student improvement, use of resources, and progress toward school, district and state standards.	• The district sets district-wide goals and standards. • The district intervenes in failing schools and ensures equity standards. • The district reports to schools and the public on school spending and student improvement on a variety of indicators. The district also disaggregates the data by race, socio-economic class, gender, special education and bilingual status. • The district gives mandated standardized tests. • The district provides regular reports to the public on a wide range of district-wide indicators.	• The state sets broad achievement and performance standards for all students. • The state provides ample resources so that goals and standards may be achieved. • The state ensures finance equity among districts. • The state conducts random and minimal standardized tests.

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APPENDIX D

NATIONAL RESOURCES

The following is a partial list of individuals and organizations who are working on various aspects of decentralization and school improvement. We recognize that this list is not exhaustive, and that many others are doing excellent work in these areas. For this reason, we have provided space at the end of this appendix for readers to fill in additional names and keep this section as a handy reference.

School Governance Councils

Centers for New Horizons
4550 S. King Dr.
Chicago, IL 60653
Contact: Sokoni Karanja
Phone: 312/373-5700

The Center for Quality Schools
370 17th St., #5300
Denver, CO 80202
Contact: Tenley Stillwell
Phone: 303/446-8876

Chicago Association of Local School Councils (CALSC)
228 S. Wabash, 6th Fl.
Chicago, IL 60604
Contact: Sheila Castillo
Phone: 312/663-3863

Schools First
6 N. Michigan Ave., #1600
Chicago, IL 60602
Contact: Eric Outten
Phone: 312/978-3478

Steele/Crofton-Ebert Collaborative Decision-Making Committee
600 S. Williams St.
Denver, CO 80209
Contact: Lyman Ho
Phone: 303/695-7324

Local School Council Training

The Center for Quality Schools
370 17th St., #5300
Denver, CO 80202
Contact: Tenley Stillwell
Phone: 303/446-8876

Chicago Panel on School Policy
200 N. Michigan Ave., #501
Chicago, IL 60601
Contact: Iva Lane
Phone: 312/346-2202

Designs for Change
6 N. Michigan Ave., #1600
Chicago, IL 60602
Contact: Joan Slay/Suzanne Davenport
Phone: 312/857-9292

Parents United for Responsible Education (PURE)
1145 W. Wilson, Box 398
Chicago, IL 60640
Contact: Julie Woestehoff
Phone: 312/784-PURE; 312/907-4727

School-Based Budgeting

Chicago Panel on School Policy
200 N. Michigan Ave., #501
Chicago, IL 60601
Contact: Iva Lane
Phone: 312/346-2202

The Chicago Public Schools Office of School-Based Budgeting
1819 Pershing Rd., 6-W
Chicago, IL 60609
Contact: Gail Williams
Phone: 312/535-8110

Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform
407 S. Dearborn, #1725
Chicago, IL 60605
Contact: Diana Lauber
Phone: 312/322-4880

Denver Public Schools
Financial/Budgeting Services
900 Grant St., Rm 305
Denver, CO 80203
Contact: Velma Rose
Phone: 303/764-3225

Edmonton Public Schools Centre for Education
One Kingsway
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5H 4G9
Phone: 403/429-8080

Institute for Education and Social Policy
New York University
285 Mercer, 10th Floor
New York, NY 10003
Contact: Bob Berne/Norm Fruchter
Phone: 212/998-5874

Mike Strembitsky
(Former Superintendent of the Edmonton, Alberta Public Schools)
700 11th St., N.W. #750
Washington, D.C. 20001
Phone: 202/783-3668

Small Schools

Center for Collaborative Education
1573 Madison Ave., Rm. 201
New York, NY 10029
Contact: Heather Lewis
Phone: 212/348-7821

Cross City Campaign for Urban School Reform
Small Schools Committee
407 S. Dearborn, #1725
Chicago, IL 60605
Contact: Janis Somerville at 301/445-1902
Contact: Michelle Fine at 212/642-2509

NCREST (The National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools, and Teaching)
Box 110
Teachers College, Columbia University
New York, NY 10027
Contact: Jacqueline Ancess
Phone: 212/678-4193

New Visions Schools Project
Fund for New York City Public Education
96 Morton St., 6th Fl.
New York, NY 10014
Contact: Naomi Barber/Eric Neidelstern
Phone: 212/645-5110

Philadelphia Education Fund
21st St. and the Parkway, #212
Philadelphia, PA 19103
Contact: Jim Culbertson
Phone: 215/665-1440

The School for Academic & Athletic Excellence
154 W. 93rd St., 7th Fl.
New York, NY 10025
Contact: Olivia Lynch
Phone: 212/678-5831

The Small Schools Coalition
Business and Professional People for the Public Interest
17 E. Monroe, #212
Chicago, IL 60603
Contact: Alex Polikoff
Phone: 312/641-5570

Small Schools Workshop
University of Illinois, College of Education
1040 W. Harrison, #3404
Chicago, IL 60607
Contact: Bill Ayers/Pat Ford
Phone: 312/413-2130

The Urban Academy
670 West End
New York, NY 10025
Contact: Ann Cook
Phone: 212/255-6665

Schools and Community

Chicago ACORN
117 W. Harrison, Rm. 200
Chicago, IL 60605
Contact: Madeline Talbott
Phone: 312/939-7488

Denver Education Network
1068 9th St.
Denver, CO 80217
Contact: Joyce Martinez
Phone: 303/556-3787

E.B.C. Bushwick High School for Public Service
1495 Herkimer St.
Brooklyn, NY 11233
Contact: Shirley Edwards
Phone: 718/498-7163

El Puente Academy for Peace & Justice
211 S. 4th St.
Brooklyn, NY 11211
Contact: Luis Garden Acosta/Frances Lucerna
Phone: 718/387-0404

Family Resource Schools
3433 W. 22nd Ave.
Denver, CO 80211
Contact: Lucy Trujillo
Phone: 303/433-8678

Good Shepherd Services
441 4th Ave.
New York, NY 11215
Contact: Jean Thomases
Phone: 718/788-0666

Minds Unlimited
5376 S. High Rd
Evergreen, CO 80439
Contact: Arnie Langberg
Phone: 303/674-0639

New Visions Schools Project
Fund for New York City Public Education
96 Morton St., 6th Fl.
New York, NY 10014
Contact: Naomi Barber
Phone: 212/645-5110

North Philadelphia Community Compact
The Lighthouse, 152 W. Lehigh
Philadelphia, PA 19139
Contact: Rochelle Nichols Solomon
Phone: 215/739-9340

Powerful Schools
3301 S. Horton
Seattle, WA 98144
Contact: Stan Hiserman/Greg Tuke
Phone: 206/722-5543

The Rheedlen Centers for Children & Families
2770 Broadway
New York, NY 10025
Contact: Geoff Canada
Phone: 212/866-0700

WSCORP/Communiversity
1900 W. Van Buren, #0215
Chicago, IL 60612
Contact: Coretta McFerren
Phone: 312/850-7116

Youth Development Institute
Fund for the City of New York
121 6th Ave., 6th Fl.
New York, NY 10013
Contact: Michele Cahill
Phone: 212/925-6675

Professional Development/School Transformation - *National Organizations*

The Algebra Project, Inc.
99 Bishop Richard Allen Drive
Cambridge, MA 02139
Phone: 617/491-0200

Coalition of Essential Schools
Brown University
Box 1969
Providence, RI 02912
Contact: Information Center
Phone: 401/863-3384

Comer Project for Change in Education
47 College St., #212
New Haven, CT 06510
Phone: 203/785-2548

Hands and Minds Collaborative
Rindge School of Technical Arts
459 Broadway
Cambridge, MA 02138
Contact: Julia Whitcavitch-DeVog
Phone: 616-349-6717

The National Center for the Accelerated Schools Project
CERAS 109
Stanford University
Stanford, CA 94305-3084
Contact: Beth Keller
Phone: 415/723-0840

The National Writing Project
School of Education
University of California
Berkeley, CA 94720
Contact: Richard Sterling
Phone: 510/642-0963

Equity/Social Justice

The Achievement Council
3460 Wilshire Blvd., #420
Los Angeles, CA 90010
Contact: Phyllis Hart
Phone: 213/487-3194

Center for Law and Education
1875 Connecticut Ave., N.W.,
Suite 510
Washington, D.C. 20009
Contact: Paul Weckstein
Phone: 202/986-3000

Education Law Center
801 Arch Street, #610
Philadelphia, PA 19107
Contact: Len Rieser
Phone: 215/238-6970

Fair Test
National Center for Fair & Open Testing
342 Broadway
Cambridge, MA 02139-1802
Contact: Monty Neill
Phone: 617/864-4810

National Coalition of Advocates for Students
100 Boylston St., #737
Boston, MA 02116
Contact: Richard Gray, Jr./Joan First
Phone: 617/357-8507

National Coalition of Educational Activists
P.O. Box 679
Rhinebeck, NY 12572-0679
Contact: Debi Duke
Phone: 914/876-4580

Rethinking Schools
1001 E. Keefe Ave.
Milwaukee, WI 53212
Contact: Bob Peterson
Phone: 414/964-9646

Supporting Diversity in Schools (SDS)
600 Norwest Center
St. Paul, MS 55101
Contact: LaVon Lee/Ruth Anne Olson
Phone: 612/625-9589

Personnel Selection

Chicago Principals and Administrators Association
221 N. LaSalle, #3313
Chicago, IL 60601
Contact: Beverly Tunney
Phone: 312/263-7767

Denver Classroom Teachers' Association
1780 S. Bellaire, #100
Denver, CO 80222
Contact: Leonard Fox
Phone: 303/782-0077

Lawyers School Reform Advisory Project
17 E. Monroe, #212
Chicago, IL 60603
Contact: Zarina O'Hagin
Phone: 312/332-2494

Montclair Elementary School
1151 Newport
Denver, CO 80220
Contact: Barbara Baker, Principal
Phone: 303/333-5497

Seattle Education Association
720 Nob Hill Ave. North
Seattle, WA 98109
(Recruitment of Teachers of Color)
Contact: Roger Erskine
Phone: 206/283-8443

United Federation of Teachers
260 Park Avenue South
New York, NY 10010
Contact: David Sherman
Phone: 212/598-9253

Teacher Peer Assessment/Counseling

Denver Classroom Teachers' Association
1780 S. Bellaire, #100
Denver, CO 80222
Contact: Leonard Fox
Phone: 303/782-0077

New Visions Schools Project
Fund for New York City Public Education
96 Morton Street, 6th Fl.
New York, NY 10014
Contact: Eric Neidelstern
Phone: 212/645-5110

Seattle Education Association
720 Nob Hill Ave. North
Seattle, WA 98109
Contact: Roger Erskine
Phone: 206/283-8443

United Federation of Teachers
260 Park Ave South
New York, NY 10010
Contact: David Sherman
Phone: 212/598-9253

Community at the Bargaining Table

The Piton Foundation
370 17th St., #5300
Denver, CO 80202
Contact: Elaine Berman
Phone: 303/825-6246

Innovative District Structures

Metro Toronto Task Force
20 York Mills Road
North York, Ontario, Canada
M2P 2G2
Contact: Bob Spencer
Phone: 416/397-2728

Rocky Mountain School of Expeditionary Learning
3755 S. Magnolia Way
Denver, CO 80237-1219
Fax: 303/756-2193

Urban Initiatives
Education Commission of the States
707 17th St., #2700
Denver, CO 80202
Contact: Christine Johnson
Phone: 303/299-3600

Facilities/School-Site Purchasing

Edmonton Public Schools
Centre for Education
One Kingsway
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5H 4G9
Phone: 403/429-8080

The TIME Project
Chicago Public Schools
1819 Pershing Rd., 6-E
Chicago, IL 60609
Contact: Roger Quinn
Phone: 312/534-8686

Washington Irving School
749 S. Oakley Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60612
Contact: Madeleine Maraldi
Phone: 312/534-7295

Accountability/Assessment

The Accountability Project
Fund for New York City Public Education
96 Morton St.
New York, NY 10014
Contact: Janet Price/Sara Schwabacker
Phone: 212/645-5110

Center for Collaborative Education
1573 Madison Avenue, Rm. 201
New York, NY 10029
Contact: Heather Lewis
Phone: 212/348-7821

Citizens Information Report
Chicago Board of Education
1819 Pershing Road, 6-W
Chicago, IL 60609
Contact: Charley Gillispie
Phone: 312/535-3700

Consortium on Chicago School Research
5835 S. Kimbark
Chicago, IL 60637
Contact: Kay Kirkpatrick
Phone: 312/702-3364

The District School Improvement and Accountability Council
The Denver Public Schools
Administration Building
900 Grant St.
Denver, CO 80203
Contact: Sherry Eastlund
Phone: 303/764-3887

Institute for Education and Social Policy
New York University
285 Mercer, 10th Floor
New York, NY 10003
Contact: Bob Berne/Norm Fruchter
Phone: 212/998-5874

Pathways to Achievement: The Three-Tiered Process
The Chicago Public Schools
1819 Pershing Rd., 6-E
Chicago, IL 60609
Contact: Pat Harvey
Phone: 312/535-3700
or
Designs for Change
6 N. Michigan Ave., #1600
Chicago, IL 60602
Contact: Don Moore
Phone 312/857-9292

School Quality Review
NCREST - Teachers College
525 W. 120th St. Box 110
New York, NY 10027
Contact: Jacqueline Ancess
Phone: 212/678-3432

School Report Card
Orca at Columbia Elementary
3528 S. Ferdinand
Seattle, WA 98118
Contact: Larry Jacobs
Phone: 206/281-6310

School Report Cards
Office of Vice Chancellor for
Academic Affairs
University of Maryland Systems
Administration
3300 Metzerott Rd.
Adelphi, MD 20783
Contact: Janis Somerville
Phone: 301/445-1902

University of Washington
Institute for Public Policy and
Management
324 Parrington Hall, Box 353060
Seattle, WA 98195
Contact: Betty Jane Narver
Phone: 206/543-0190

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